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ABSTRACT

A pilot study concerning the range of writing skills of intermediate students of English as a second language (ESL) is reported. The study identified the clause structures and relative low-order linguistic skills in the writing samples of 25 college students in this group. The method of evaluation of writing samples was a model of conformity to correct prose, focusing on three error types: word form, word order, and word choice. The first part of the report summarizes the goals of the original study, outlines the research design, and gives an analysis of the results. The second part includes discussion of three cases, each representing a particular kind of intermediate ESL writer, performing at high-, middle-, and low-intermediate levels. The third part summarizes the findings with respect to current pedagogical approaches and notes some implications for further research. (Author/MSE)

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The Broad Nature of Intermediate EFL Writing: Difficulties and Challenges for the EFL Instructor

This paper presents the findings from a pilot study identifying the clause structures and relative lower order linguistic skills in the writing samples of twenty-five intermediate level EFL students in two university programs. The method chosen for objective evaluation of the writing samples was Oller's conformity to correct prose model, focusing on the three error types of word form, word order, and word choice. The first part summarizes the goals of the original study, the research design (subjects and procedure), and gives an analysis of the results. The second part includes a discussion of three cases, each representing a particular kind of EFL intermediate writer, performing at high, middle, and low intermediate ranges. The third part presents a summary of the findings with respect to current pedagogical approaches and suggests some implications for further research.

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PART I

GOALS OF THE STUDY: This research attempted to explore the nature of intermediate EFL writing by addressing three central questions: 1) How are intermediate EFL students in regard to sentence level preparation? 2) How can the parameters of intermediate level writing be defined so that the EFL instructor knows where to start and where to head? and, 3) How do complex embeddings influence lower order syntactic and lexical errors?

One of the most problematic issues of EFL writing at the intermediate level is its simple lack of definition at the syntactic level. EFL instructors, teaching writing courses at the intermediate level for the first time, oftentimes find themselves "discovering" the nature of intermediate writing shortly before the semester ends.

Though interest in EFL writing and the composing process has increased in the last twenty-five years (Briere, 1966; Hunt, 1970; Zamal,1976,1982; Taylor,1976; Thomas-Ruzic, 1984; Lorenz, 1984; Raimes, 1976), this body of research has yet to produce data-based studies that carefully examine what EFL students at the intermediate level are capable of producing. To date, only one such study (Homburg, 1984) attempts to define the nature of thirty compositions by students of English as a second language (ELI/Univeristy of Michigan) by looking at objective measures such as measures of length, measures of subordination and

relativization, measures of sentence connectors, and measures of number and type of errors. Homburg's focus, however, is the validation of the holistic evaluation of ESL compositions, not the categorization of compositions into proficiency levels.

For the most part, practitioners agree that the range of levels is considerable, with some students having the ability to compose in simple structures, producing vocabulary that is limited, and with other students having the fluency to write in sophisticated language structures with a more limited range of errors. Since most instructors believe that L2 writing ability progresses along a continuum, most expect that the intermediate class will have a wide range of abilities. Within this range of abilities, most classes contain some students with either severe language interference problems or some students whose hyper-correct sense of text accuracy allows them only to produce text that remains at a very simple syntactic level.

This study examines the products of intermediate level EFL writers in an attempt to define more precisely the range and depth of abilities present. With knowledge of what tools in writing students demonstrate, EFL instructors may be better equipped to plan syllabi, choose textbooks, and design activities to help students acquire the composition skills necessary for college level work.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY: This study took place during the 1986 fall semester and 1987 spring semester at George Washington University and the University of the District of Columbia, Washington, D.C. Twenty-five students were selected for the

project on the basis of two criteria: enrollment in an EFL intermediate level writing course and interest in participating.

Students from George Washington University (2 classes of EFL 40) were enrolled in Intensive Higher-Intermediate English which focuses on a comprehensive review of grammatical structures and composition instruction highlighting outlining and techniques of exposition. The grammar and composition component consisted of ten hours of instruction per week. At the University of the District of Columbia, students were enrolled in English Fundamentals, the pre-requisite EFL course for English Composition I. In English Fundamentals, instructors help non-native speakers improve written and oral English expression by focusing on grammatical accuracy, sentence clarity, and paragraph effectiveness, with special attention to idioms, prepositions, tense sequencing, and punctuation. Both groups were concentrating in their classes on grammatical control while working on writing fluency.

A picture-based writing sample was elicited in the following manner. Each student was presented with a photocopy of a sketch (from Timmel and Hope's Training for Transformation) and a lined sheet of paper for writing, and was instructed to write a short story or essay describing the picture as accurately as possible. (Refer to Figure 1). Special care was taken in choosing the sketch for eliciting the writing sample to make sure that it contained a variety of concrete objects that could be described. In addition, the sketch was suggestive enough so that students could interpret it in a variety of ways that called upon higher cognitive processes. Students were not allowed to use

FIGURE ONE

Examine this sketch and then write a short story or essay describing the picture as accurately as you can on the piece of paper attached. Re-paint the picture with words, as if you were describing the picture to a blind person. Take about 20 to 30 minutes to complete the task.

dictionaries or grammar texts during the thirty-minute writing task.

Twenty-five writing samples were then collected from three different classes. Subjects represented the following language groups in the numbers shown: 4 Arabic, 4 Korean, 3 Japanese, 3 Spanish, 2 Chinese, 2 Turkish, 2 Amharic, 2 French/Creole, 1 Persian, 1 Tigrinya, 1 Somali. From each sample the following data was collected:

1. number of words,
2. number of sentences,
3. number of T-units,

[The T-unit, (minimal terminable unit) a measure of syntactic complexity, was first developed by Kellogg Hunt, who defines it as a "main clause plus all subordinate clauses and non-clausal structures attached or embedded in it" (Hunt, 1970).]

4. mean length of T-units,
5. percentage of sentences with co-ordinate clauses,
6. percentage of single-clause T-units,
7. total number of clauses per T-unit,
8. verbal phrases per T-unit,
9. percentage of words beyond the most common 4,000 (Thorndike-Lorge,1944)
10. percentage of T-units involving interpretation rather than description,
11. conformity-to-correct prose score (Oller, 1979), and
12. total errors.

In using Oller's conformity-to-correct prose model, each composition was read and rewritten according to correct usage,

making the revised version by changing distorted forms or misused items, deleting superfluous or extraneous material, or by adding essential forms or information for clarity. In determining conformity-to-correct prose score, compositions were evaluated on the basis of errors of word forms, word choice (omitted and incorrect articles were included here), and word order only. Even though other categories could have been included, the researcher felt that these three error types gave the greatest insight into sentence level preparation and lower order skills that students do or do not have under control. Lorenz, Meyer, and Vann (1984) verify this notion in their study on "Error Gravity" where faculty respondents judged as "least acceptable" those errors which, for the most part, were "global" and "relatively rare violations" for native speakers. Such errors, according to the authors, include word order, it-deletion, tense, relative clause errors, and word choice.

Though obviously there are many other composing skills in process (topic sentence control, cohesion, tone, voice, sense of audience, organization), this study was designed to concentrate on syntactic fluency and clausal embeddings on the sentence level rather than on the rhetorical skill of composing.

DATA RESULTS: The student samples were rank ordered based on the conformity to correct prose score ranging from 100% to 67%. From this rank order, the students' scores were grouped into the top third scores (hereafter referred to as G1), the middle scores (G2), and the lower third scores (G3). A summary

of all statistics for the twenty-five subjects is given as an appendix at the end of the paper.

TABLE 1

Descriptive Statistics of Mean Scores
Based on the Conformity to Correct Prose Rankings

	Conf. to Correct Prose	Total Words	Total Word Errors	T-Units	Mean Length of T-Units	% Phrases	% Clauses	% Single Clauses
TOP THIRD SAMPLES G1 (Rank 1 to 8)	88.25	142.0	8.6	11.75	12.84	.33	.46	.65
MIDDLE GROUP G2 (Rank 9 to 17)	79.00	133.44	13.88	10.22	14.18	.38	.86	.54
LOWER THIRD SAMPLES G3 (Rank 18 to 25)	70.00	123.12	17.48	10.34	12.22	.21	.54	.60

In the first three columns of Table One, we see the expected increasing number of total words and the decreasing number of total word errors from the lower third to the top third group. For number of T-units, we note the relative close range of scores from 10.22 to 11.75 and the relative close range of scores existing for mean length of T-units, 12.22 words per T-unit to 14.18.

The measures for subordination (% phrases and % clauses) show higher percentages, 36% and 86% respectively, for the middle group, and a lower percentage, 54%, for single clauses.

DISCUSSION: It is assumed by many EFL/ESL textbooks writers of the pattern-practice and substitution drill school that low level writers compose in simple structures, exhibiting control over more sophisticated patterns only at the advanced levels. Yet what we find is that many EFL writers, who have complex structures mastered in their native languages, attempt complex embeddings at a very early stage of writing development.

What is quite striking in the data results is the lower percentages of phrases and clauses in both the upper and bottom groups, as compared with those of the middle group. In addition, we can note the lower percentage of single clauses per T-unit in the middle group and lower mean length of T-units (10.22), which suggests greater embedding of clauses. In Table 2, we can compare the mean scores of the three groups:

TABLE 2

Mean Percentages of Phrases, Clauses, and Single Clauses per T-Unit

	% Phrases	% Clauses	% Single Clauses
G1	.33	.46	.65
G2	.38	.86	.54
G3	.21	.54	.60

The 86% score of clauses for the middle-third group is a particularly interesting finding as it indicates the quantity of clause structures that intermediate level students are attempting in their writings.

One interpretation for these results is that intermediate students fall into at least three

performative categories: the "safe and cautious" EFL writer who communicates ideas in short, choppy, grammatically correct simple sentences; the "challenging and ambitious" EFL writer who attempts to express himself in complex structures with a certain lack of control of these forms and structures; and the "unskilled and near-novice" EFL writer who oftentimes attempts complex embeddings with a high incidence of errors. This last kind of student writer appears to be in continuous struggle with the linguistic code, having not yet mastered elementary verb forms, article use, word order, agreement, or modification. A close look at three cases in Part II will provide graphic evidence of the reality of these three performative categories.

It must be noted, however, that certain general tendencies do exist among the twenty-five student papers from two different academic-track programs. This evidence lends credence to the notion that there is, in fact, such an elusive entity as intermediate level writing.

The first similarity occurs in the range of total words written during the thirty-minute task. Though the mean scores differ and show a decrease from the top third score of 142.00, to the middle third score of 133.44, to the bottom third of 123.12, the actual ranges of scores are strikingly alike. The range of number of words for G1 is 70-214 words, for G2 70-215 words, and for G3 64-204 words, which suggests that both high and low fluency rates are possible in each of the three levels.

The mean scores of T-units and of mean length of T-unit are very close as are the mean percentages of single clause T-units, as we can note from Table 3:

TABLE 3

Descriptive Statistics of T-Units, Mean Lengths, and Single Clauses

	T-Units	Mean Length of T-Units	% Single Clauses
G1	11.25	12.84	.65
G2	10.22	14.18	.54
G3	10.34	12.22	.60

What this indicates, according to Kellogg Hunt's T-unit paradigm, is that the terminable unit measure for syntactic maturity is relatively stable and within a limited range (10.22 to 11.75). The same is true of the mean length of T-units ranging from 12.22 to 14.18. Because we do not see such disparities of scores at this level, we can hypothesize that the complex embeddings going on, indications of a language mature writer, are characteristic features of intermediate level writing. Evidence for this commonality occurs as well in the 50% to 60% range of single clause T-units within a given sample. Noticeably, this range for single clauses is high; yet, for an intermediate student, perhaps the score reveals the struggle to attempt and use correctly clausal structures within a passage of text.

One last feature, a semantic more than a syntactic aspect, reveals that word choice, according to Thorndike-Lorge's list of 4,000 lexical items, is a constant at the intermediate level with G1 and G3 going 2.4% beyond the most common 4,000 words, and G2 going 2.0% beyond the most common. This measure suggests that vocabulary at this intermediate level continues to be limited to most common items, though this factor might have been influenced by the nature of the writing task.

PART II

AN EXAMINATION OF THREE CASES

In the next section, we will examine in detail the kinds of formal writing intermediate students are producing. The following three samples are taken from each of the three groups previously discussed: Ana Gloria (language: French/Creole), a sample from the top third; Jin Chung (language: Korean) from the middle third; and HW (language: Korean) from the lower third. Particular care was taken in choosing the three cases for examination. None of the cases discussed in this paper are exceptional in their scores, but rather each represents a particular sub-type within the group of twenty-five papers. Selection was based on the representative nature of the sample, not its particular length or content. The three cases, taken together, indicate the breadth of ability levels among intermediate writers. Table 4 summarizes the findings of the three case studies.

TABLE 4

Comparative Statistics of Three Student Samples

	Rank Order	Conf. to Correct Prose	Total Words	T-Units	Mean Len. of T-Units	% of single clauses	% of phrases	% of clauses
1. Ana	1	100%	78	8	9.75	.63	.25	.37
2. Jin	9	82%	215	13	16.54	.54	.69	.92
3. HW	23	65%	131	14	9.36	.71	.36	.29

Case One:*

The picture shows two aspects. First, on top three men are having a party. There are a lot of fruits, drinks and foods. The table cannot even contain all they have. Second, underneath the table there are different people who hold the table but don't have anything to eat nor drink. This is just like life in any capitalist systmem. Some have too much; some others who made the drinks, the foods, and the fruits don't have anything.

*Note: For case studies, students' hand-written products were typed, preserving orginal style, mechanics, and spelling.

Ana Gloria's sample received the highest conformity to correct prose score, 100%, of the twenty-five papers. In her 78-word composition, she had no errors in word form, word choice, or word order. In addition, capitalization, punctuation, and verb tenses were correctly executed.

What is obvious about the passage, syntactically, is its simple sentence structure and predominance of SV, SVO,

or SVVO sentence patterns with little variation. Though the passage does contain two relative clauses, one noun clause, and two infinitive phrases, it is otherwise straightforward with only 50% of T-units dealing with abstract rather than concrete ideas. Here's where the notion of "good writing skill" comes into question. Do we associate "good writing skill" with grammatically correct sentences? Intuitively, we feel at odds with this kind of naive student writing at the intermediate level, as it comes across as too elementary, very cautious, and slightly immature. We also note that vocabulary remains simple, with only 1% of words going beyond the most common 4,000 (Thorndike-Lorge), indicating that the writer's lexicon is also rather limited. The "safe and cautious" student, as illustrated by the case above, perhaps compromises a more thoughtful and challenging style for a grammatically correct one, oftentimes with the explicit aim of pleasing the grammar-conscious instructor.

Case Two:

According to this picture, we can devide into two Parts; upper part and bottom part. In the upper part, there are three persons who enjoy drinking and eating food with their own purposes. It seems that they are high-level or governers who are controlling the low-level people. I think that they entertain just luxurious lives as if they live the paradise without thinking the other part in which most of people struggle to live themselves because they are hungry and work much time without the reasonable compensation. I think that they are leaders of communist or top managements of monopolistic capitalism which is harmful to democratic society. On the other hand, most of low-level people bear up these bourgeoisie. It seems that they work all the time daily, so they are too tired to smile in their lives. They cannot receive enough money. They have a just small and low education, but they are naive without taking a trick to other people in order to perform their own profits. In this picture, therefore, I think that there are two parts of people who are produced by the complex society in the world. So. we try to think highly and importantly of low-level people rather than high-level people like the bourgeoisie.

Jin's 215 word sample, receiving a conformity to correct prose score of 82%, represents the kind of writing at the syntactic level that appears in intermediate writing more frequently than that of the previous sample. First, note the jump in passage length, T-unit length, and mean length of T-units (see Table 4) from Ana's sample. This data suggests that the student is quantitatively more fluent (78 to 215 words; 8 to 13 T-units) and can produce significantly longer T-units (compare mean lengths of 9.75 to 16.54).

In examining the inner structure of Jin's text, we note the following features: 12 subordinate clauses (5 relative, 2 adverbial, 5 noun); 9 phrases (5 infinitive, 4

gerund); 19 total word errors (2 word forms, 16 word choice, 1 word order); and 92% of T-units involving interpretation rather than description. What we see going on in Jin's writing appear to be quantum leaps from the simplicity of Ana's writing, especially in regards to syntactic maturity and sophistication.

We can see the sophistication of thought as exemplified by the embeddings in the following example from Jin's sample: "In this picture, therefore, I think that there are two parts of people who are produced by the complex society in the world." (T-unit length: 23.0 words) Though word choice ("parts") and word form ("society") errors are present, the sentence works and goes beyond the SVO structure by correct use of noun and relative clauses. The student demonstrates, here and in other examples from the passage, a sense of control over the embeddings he attempts by properly introducing clauses with phrases "It seems that" and "I think that" and by properly using relative pronouns,"who" and "that," and subordinate conjunctions, "as if" and "because." Also, control in using these clausal embeddings is evident in his use of end punctuation and commas. This writer supplies the inter-sentence connections ("on the other hand" "so" "but" "therefore") to establish relationships between the clausal structures he sets up. It is obvious that this writer, at a higher syntactic level of proficiency, does more of the thinking for his reader than the immature, or syntactically simple writer does.

Jin's passage is far from flawless, but it is an indication of potential and control that the student already has. We can conclude that certain forms--infinitives, gerunds, relative clauses--are well under way towards being mastered. The student needs refinement now, especially in regard to word choice.

Case Three:

This sketch expreses the rich and the poor. The picture evolves contrast between rich men and poor men. Although we can find only difference of eating life in picture but there are repressed meanings.

First of all, the picture talks difference of food, I said above. Richmen eat a lot and they enjoy eating them themselves While poormen have problem of eating itself. They don't think better food, better mood.

In addition, poormen is ridden-people by richmen. The poor has not only physical pain but also mental pain from the other group. Finally, it is very important not to have communication, interaction each other. Richmen don't help poormen and they don't cate it.

I think this picture have issue of World's problems This picture may make us to be sad.

HW's 131-word sample, receiving a conformity to correct prose score of 69%, represents the kind of writing going on at the lower ends of the intermediate spectrum. Note that we see both a decrease in word fluency (215 words to 131 words) and in mean length of T-unit (16.54 words per T-unit to 9.36), suggesting a decline in clausal embeddding.

HW's paper, as predicted, does show a decrease in embedding (three adverb clauses, one noun clause, five phrases), but what is most problematic for the EFL teacher

is the high ratio of errors to words, a figure of 22 to 131, with 68% of errors being those of word choice.

This kind of writing is, in many ways, the most problematic for instructors at the beginning level because teachers simply do not know where to start. Though the student shows some subordination, he is still struggling with the linguistic code to such an extent that the instructor hardly knows how to address the needs evident. The student has not yet mastered some of the syntactic structures which he wishes to use, as in these examples: 1) "Although we can find only difference of eating life in picture, but there are repressed meanings." Here, the student knows the punctuation of introductory adverb clauses and shows a limited knowledge of connectors (especially by virtue of using two in one sentence), but lacks sufficient semantic knowledge of the subordinate conjunction "although," as evidenced by the inclusion of the coordinate conjunction "but." He does not demonstrate full control of conjunctive features. 2) "First of all, the picture talks difference of food, I said above." In this sentence, we see the omission of subordinate conjunction "as" or "like" which cannot be elliptical in this context. Also, we note the problem where the student has not yet mastered the phrasal verb "talks about." 3) "While poormen have problem of eating itself." Here, there appears little connection between the subordinate conjunction "While" and the independent clause preceding or succeeding it, thus causing ambiguity. This ambiguity

is compounded by a possible third reading which is by interpretating "while" as "while on the other hand," contrasting the gluttony of the rich and the stark problem of finding any food of the poor. The real problem becomes, then, the themselves:itself distinction of the two sequential sentences.

What we see, then, is an example of the unskilled and near-novice intermediate EFL writer who possesses some knowledge of more complex structures, as demonstrated by the embeddings in individual sentences, but who has not mastered control over them. We can note this lack of control in HW's example by his use of two different kinds of joiners (as in example 1), by his omission of a subordinate conjunction (example 2), and in the confusion arising from a poorly punctuated and unattached adverb clause and the themselves:itself problem (example 3). Here in HW's paper and in others from the bottom third group, there exists an unevenness at the syntactic level. The sizeable decrease in percentages of phrases and clauses in the lower group is, in many ways, set off by the higher word errors. Students at this level seems to be aiming lower and achieving less because of marked gaps in grammatical control.

PART III

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS: One major finding of this study is that intermediate students whose papers contain multiple sentence-level errors are attempting complex embeddings without having completely mastered the forms and mechanics of those structures. We assume that low level writers will begin by writing in simple clause structures, as we see in first language acquisition with the systematic acquisition of synatactic structures. However, in adult EFL writing, where sophisticated language patterns already exist in the native speaker's language, we find an underlying tension between the already learned syntactic patterns of L1 and the newly acquired but not yet mastered patterns of L2.

Furthermore, we can also see very distinctly the differences in what students aim for at the syntactic level. In the case of Ana Gloria, the aims are very low in regards to sentence complexity, whereas for Jin, they are very high, and for HW they are overly ambitious. Otherwise stated, while the aims are high for both Ana Gloria and Jin, Jin's writing in English keeps more in line with his grammatical competence than does Ana's writing. As the teacher becomes more familiar with the writing potential of each student, he needs to know at what points he should encourage students to aim higher and practice different kinds of embeddings and at what points

he should be slowing students down to master simpler forms first.

Another important finding concerns the parameters of intermediate level writing. We can detect the range of writing at this level by noting the consistencies in passage length, number of T-units, T-unit length, and lexical development. These boundaries are important to identify because of the multi-level nature of intermediate level writing. We must be able to distinguish between beginning/ novice writing and advanced composition so that students will be properly placed, and then be properly guided in writing instruction.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH: This study brings into question once more the notion of "good writing" as being equatable with grammatical facility, for we recognize quite readily that the writing sample of Case 1 is not what teachers are hoping that their students will produce. The kinds of sentence-level grammar points that are measured by the Oller scores are not the kinds of matters that writing teachers should focus on. As we know, there is much more to writing than this. However, from close clausal analysis and diagnosis of writing levels within a multi-level writing class, instructors can prepare instruction that appropriately suits students with such a broad range of needs.

One implication for teaching, then, occurs in response to student writing like that of Case 1,--simplified, straightforward prose that comes across as elementary. Here, the teacher needs to free up the grammatical monitor of the student, possibly put a halt to substitution drills and pattern practice drills that emphasize control, and encourage frequent uncontrolled writing practice (as in dialogue journals) with some work in sentence-combining. Also this might be the time to use student models, where the student evaluates several essays on the basis of clause and verb phrases structure and judges them accordingly. Bringing up the notion of embedding and giving some concrete suggestions on how to do so within a text might provide ample motivation for the all too cautious and word-perfect writer.

Another major implication derives from the majority of student writing, like Case 2, that has substance and movement yet is unpolished. Traditionally, these students--and in my view they are the bulk of intermediate level writers--are labeled as poor writers solely on the basis of surface features. Now, from the contrast of Cases 2 and 3, one can detect that a difference exists between surface features that require "cleaning up" and features which seriously interfere with the extraction of meaning from the text. From his writing, it appears the Jin has mastered a variety of complex syntactic structures (adverb, noun, and relative clauses as well as two different kinds of phrases) and can control these forms

with a high degree of correctness. Therefore, much class time devoted to substitution drills or manipulation exercises will not address Jin's need which appears to be word choice and usage. Though this task of individualizing instruction based on close diagnosis of kinds of clausal embeddings students are controlling may seem formidable, it appears to be a more pedagogically sound procedure than imposing another set of pattern practice exercises that are simply repetition of prior knowledge.

A third implication for teaching, concerning the representative writing ability shown in Case 3, is that teachers need to give instruction to simplify or to bring under control the lower order forms that are not yet mastered. The clause and phrase structures evident in many of the student samples in the lower-third group suggest higher aims. Students appear to be attempting to match their native-level grammatical competence with structures in English, without fully mastering the forms. The question here remains whether or not the student should be confined to sentence level production to eliminate the preponderance of errors or whether the student should be advanced to text-level work. Traditionally, most intermediate level EFL students are at essay-level work. However, perhaps instructors need to help students extricate themselves from the knots and tangles of their sentences first, before they are given text-level writing tasks.

Though Oller's conformity-to-correct prose model serves to measure the students' written product, it certainly is only one tool available to instructors for objectively scoring and ranking student writing. Teachers should be cautioned about using procedures like Oller's, for though it is useful for research and diagnostic purposes, it is too narrow-too code-centered--to provide a good overall rating of student writing ability. It seems most important that we start developing alternative measuring devices, such as one that analyzes passages for sentence patterns or ranks student writng according to complexity versus simplicity of clause structures. These assessment tools are essential for diagnosing student writing for placement and for teachers to know exactly where to go in their syllabi, by building on students' prior knowledge.

In addition to devising more assessment tools for students' products, it would be beneficial to see more data-based studies (with pre-and-post tests given) that measure syntactic development and compare different pedagogical approaches, such as one program that worked through a particular grammar sequence based on sentence level work versus a program that used both a grammar workbook, a whole essay approach, and dialogue journals. More studies of this nature are needed to decide whether or not syntactic complexity of EFL students moves along a developmental continuum as does vocabulary. These and other studies of student products can give valuable

insight and direction to teachers in determining the course of intermediate level writing classes.

Ranking According to
Conformity to Correct Score

RESULTS

	STUDENT SAMPLE	TOTAL WORDS	CONF. TO CORRECT PROSE	TOTAL WORD ERRORS	T-UNITS	MEAN LENGTH T-UNITS	% PHRASE	% CLAUSES	% SINGLE CLAUSES
1.	25	78	100	0	8	9.75	.25	.37	.63
2.	21	77	.92	3	12	5.92	.08	.25	.92
3.	20	70	.87	4	7	10.00	.00	.28	.71
4.	5	247	.87	14	24	10.29	.25	.37	.66
5.	6	179	.86	14	11	16.27	.45	.36	.63
6.	8	214	.86	15	11	19.45	.73	.73	.36
7.	16	146	.85	9	9	16.22	.44	.77	.66
8.	4	178	.83	10	12	14.83	.42	.58	.66
9.	3	215	.82	19	13	16.54	.69	.92	.54
10.	23	112	.82	11	12	9.33	.58	.17	.92
11.	19	70	.82	7	5	14.00	.00	1.60	.20
12.	13	120	.80	13	11	10.91	.18	.64	.73
13.	18	123	.79	13	6	20.50	.00	1.30	.50
14.	24	96	.78	10	8	12.00	.25	.37	.63
15.	9	170	.77	18	17	11.33	.41	.41	.47
16.	15	138	.76	17	13	10.62	.31	.62	.46
17.	1	157	.75	17	7	22.43	1.00	1.70	.43
18.	22	127	.74	17	10	12.70	.40	.90	.50
19.	7	204	.72	27	9	22.66	.55	1.30	.22
20.	12	146	.71	16	12	12.16	.33	.25	.75
21.	14	113	.70	16	12	9.42	.08	.50	.50
22.	2	129	.69	17	12	10.75	.00	.42	.66
23.	11	131	.69	22	14	9.36	.36	.29	.71
24.	17	64	.68	11	5	12.80	.00	.20	.80
25.	10	71	.67	13	9	7.89	.22	.44	.66

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